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Implementation of the international drug control treaties: other matters arising from the international drug control treaties

National database system

Note by the Secretariat

1. In its resolution 2001/18 of 24 July 2001, entitled "Implementation of the computer and telecommunication system for international and national drug control developed by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme", the Economic and Social Council commended the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) on its success to date in developing the national database system and on its responsiveness to the requirements of Member States in developing the system.

2. In the same resolution, the Council noted that the representatives of 25 Governments attending the third meeting of the group of users of the national database system, held in Vienna from 1 to 3 November 2000, had concluded that the national database system was a comprehensive and mature product that is highly user-friendly and ready for detailed testing and possible implementation in many countries. Also in the same resolution, the Council requested UNDCP to report to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its forty-fifth session on the national database system. The present report has been prepared in response to that request.

3. On the basis of the recommendations made by the third meeting of the group of users of the national database system, UNDCP developed a work plan for the activities of the system in 2001. The plan focused primarily on expanding the use of the system to as many competent authorities as possible, following a series of missions by the project team of the national database system. Each mission carried out the installation of the system and provided training in its use. Equipment was provided and infrastructure software licences were made available to the competent

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national authorities. When appropriate, equipment and licences were also provided to regional projects conducted by UNDCP, such as the licit drug control project in eastern Africa and the precursor control projects in south Asia, central Asia and Latin America.

4. Installation of national database system 4.0 and training were provided during 2001 to the following States: Australia, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Hungary, India, Ireland, Jordan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Slovakia, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay and Uzbekistan.

5. The activities related to the national database system were funded from the Development Account of the United Nations. The funds allotted for the system from that account were exhausted in 2001. Thus, UNDCP developed a project idea for 2002-2003 to continue the national database system initiative. The project idea was circulated at the fourth meeting of the group of users of the national database system, held in Vienna on 1 October 2001.

6. UNDCP is in the process of preparing a project document to continue the national database system initiative during 2002-2003. The new project would be subject to voluntary contributions from Member States.

7. The fourth meeting of the group of users of the national database system was attended by representatives of 49 States. The meeting unanimously concluded that the national database system was a mature system that fully served the needs of national and international control of licit drugs, and that set standards for automating national and international drug control. The process of setting standards was highly commended, and UNDCP was requested to continue its support for the system.

8. The need to ensure the viability of the national database system was a major concern for all States represented at the meeting. The representatives of Australia, France, Germany, Switzerland and the United States proposed that UNDCP sustain the system as a normative function rather than a technical cooperation project.

9. The need for continuous training and support for the competent national authorities was highlighted by the meeting.

10. There was widespread support for the continuation of the national database system during 2002 and 2003. Possible enhancements to the system were discussed, and experiences were shared on ways of implementing the system to maximize its benefits. The suggestions made were included by UNDCP in its project idea for 2002-2003.

11. The meeting also recommended providing a higher level of support for developing countries, which encountered great difficulties in implementing the national database system because of their limited national infrastructure to support information technology. A process of transfer of ownership was recommended for developed countries, with UNDCP remaining the substantive owner of the national database system.